

LADYBIRD CHILDREN'S CLASSICS



KIDNAPPED







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LADYBIRD CHILDREN'S CLASSICS



KIDNAPPED

by Robert Louis Stevenson



Retold by John Grant
illustrated by Terry Gabbey

Ladybird Books Loughborough

KIDNAPPED

My troubles began from the moment that I raised my hand and knocked at the iron-studded door of the House of Shaws. There I stood, David Balfour, in the warmth of a June evening. I was seventeen. I had a few shillings in my pocket; and my parents were dead. I also had a letter of introduction to my uncle, Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws. He was my only relative, and a rich man.



A sound made me look up... into the muzzle of a blunderbuss. From the open window a voice called, "Who's there?" My uncle had welcomed me to the House of Shaws.



Grudgingly, Uncle Ebenezer gave me a meal and a bed for the night. The house was a grim barracks of a building, partly unfinished. Even those parts that *were* complete were damp and crumbling. I had thought that the Laird of Shaws would live in style. My uncle lived alone, a miser, hated by all the people in the countryside around.



On the night after my arrival the weather grew stormy. As we sat by a feeble fire in the kitchen, Uncle Ebenezer handed me a key. "Fetch me down the chest from the room at the top of the tower," he said.

The tower entrance was outside the house and I groped my way in the glare of the lightning. Halfway to the top, a brighter flash than before filled the tower with light... and I saw that I stood on the edge of the last complete step. Below me was a dark, yawning gap. A moment later and I should have fallen to my death.

Afraid and angry, I returned to the kitchen. Uncle Ebenezer looked up, startled, as I entered. Then he fell to the floor in a faint. Had he planned to murder me?

Next morning, my uncle treated my near-disaster as a joke. He had business in the nearby town of Queensferry, he said, and invited me to accompany him. The business was with his lawyer, Rankeillor, and a Captain Hoseason of the brig *Covenant*.

We met the captain at an inn, and I got into conversation with the ship's boy. He told me that the *Covenant* regularly carried convicted criminals and other unwilling passengers to become slaves in the American colonies.

When the captain invited us to visit his ship where it lay at anchor I was eager to go. My uncle and I were rowed out to the vessel. I was first aboard. I turned in time to see the boat and Uncle Ebenezer heading back towards the shore. Then a heavy blow to the head sent me tumbling senseless on the deck.

I awoke to find myself a prisoner below decks, where I remained for many days while the ship sailed north, then west between the islands of Orkney and Shetland. And then I was allowed on deck, to find that the wind had turned foul and was pushing us steadily south.



To make matters worse the weather grew foggy. Even as the sailors peered into the murk there was a cry, then a crash. The *Covenant* had collided with another vessel. It



was a fishing boat, and quickly lost to view, but not before one man had leapt upwards to seize hold of the *Covenant's* bowsprit and pulled himself to safety.

That is how I came to meet Alan Breck Stewart. He was a short man, and something of a dandy in his plumed hat, blue coat with silver buttons, and a sword by his side.



I had been put to work in the round-house, a cabin in the middle part of the ship which doubled as officers' quarters and ship's armoury. Alan was quartered in the round house, and I quickly got to know him. We had something in common, neither of us being wilful passengers on board. As we became friends I learned that he was a Jacobite. When Prince Charlie failed to win the throne in 1746 his followers fled, many abroad. Such was Alan Breck Stewart. But during the last five years he had returned to Scotland many times in secret, to collect money for Ardsheil, his exiled clan chief. He was completing such a mission when his boat was run down by the *Covenant*. The money, a fortune in gold coin, he carried in a belt around his waist.

But the captain and crew found out about the belt of gold, and were determined to have it. We barricaded ourselves in the round-house. I loaded all the pistols I could find, while Alan, sword drawn, stationed himself by the door. And not a moment too soon. Led by the captain, the crew stormed the round-house. The battle was fast and furious. Twice we repelled attack, partly by my firing pistols out of the window, but chiefly by Alan's brilliant swordsmanship.



"Am I not a bonny fighter?" he cried in triumph. Then he rewarded me for my part in the victory with a silver button cut from his coat.

With most of the crew dead or wounded,
the captain asked for a truce. Alan made him
agree to land him on the shore of Loch Linnhe
close to his own clan country of Appin. But,
shorthanded, the ship

was difficult to
manage. In the
middle of the night
she ran onto a
reef off the coast
of the island of Mull.
Held fast, she was
helpless in the path
of a giant wave.
In a moment I was
swept overboard.
Clinging to a spar I
was carried ashore
by the current
onto a small,
barren island.

For four days I wandered the island, exhausted, cold and hungry. I ate raw shellfish, and wept with vexation at the closeness of the main island across a narrow strait. To make it worse I could see the smoke from a chimney rising above a low hill. Then the crew of a fishing boat hailed me, and pointed to the strait. And I realised that when the tide was at its lowest ebb the channel between the islands almost dried out. Wasting no another moment I waded across, the water little more than knee deep. By evening, I had reached the house whose chimney smoke I had seen.

It was a cottage: low, stone built, and roofed with turf. An old man sat smoking his pipe before the door. He told me that the survivors of the wreck of the *Covenant* had



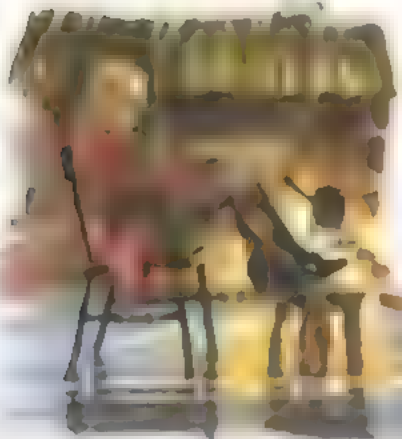
already passed that way. Then I showed him Alan's silver button. "Ah," he said, "I have a message for the lad with the button. You are to go by way of Torosay to join your friend in Appin."

After a meal and a night's rest, I said goodbye to the old gentleman and his wife. Four days' walking took me across Mull to Torosay, from where I crossed by ferry to Lochaline on the mainland. The ferry skipper was one Neil Roy Macrob. Alon had told me that the Macrobs were kin to the Appin Stewarts, and I again produced my button. And again there was a message for me. I was to make my way to the house of John of the Claymore in Ardgour, and from there to seek out James of the Glens in Appin at a place called Auchorn. As I left the ferry, Neil Roy Macrob warned me to stay clear of patrols of the "red soldiers".

The inn at Lochaline was a miserable place.

During the night

it rained and the floor became ankle deep in water. I was more than glad to leave early in the morning.



I was scarcely on my way when I overtook a stout little man. He had a very solemn expression, read a book while he walked, and had the look of a minister about him. He proved a pleasant (and useful) companion. He was a Lowlander like myself, a travelling preacher. His name was Henderland. He told of the troubles which had befallen the



Highlands after the defeat of the Jacobites. He spoke of the "Red Fox", and here I pricked up my ears. On board ship Alan had often spoken that name, usually in anger. He had even sworn to kill the man who bore it. Who was he, I asked.

The Red Fox, explained Mr Henderland, was the nickname of Colin Campbell of Glenure. He was one of the king's agents sent to administer the lands of dead or exiled Jacobites. Everyone in Appin hated him and would dearly like to see him dead.

I spent that night as a guest of Mr Henderland.



Next morning he arranged for me to be taken across Loch Linnhe in a fishing boat. As we neared the farther shore I saw a column of the "red soldiers" marching by the lochside into Appin. The fishermen put me ashore where the Wood of Lettermore came close to the water's edge. The trees clung to the steep mountainside, and a narrow, twisting track served as a road. I was sitting by a wayside spring eating the oat bread given me by Mr Henderland for my journey when there came the sounds of men and horses.



Leading their mounts along the track came four men. One was obviously a Highland servant, a portmanteau and a bag of lemons slung on his horse's back. In front of him came a man whose black clothes and white wig showed him to be a lawyer, and, bringing up the rear, one in the dress of a Sheriff's Officer.

But it was the leader of the party who caught my special attention. He was a bluff, redheaded figure of commanding appearance who fanned himself with his hat in the noon-day heat.

I rose and asked the way to Aucharn.

"Whom do you seek in Aucharn?" asked the redheaded man.

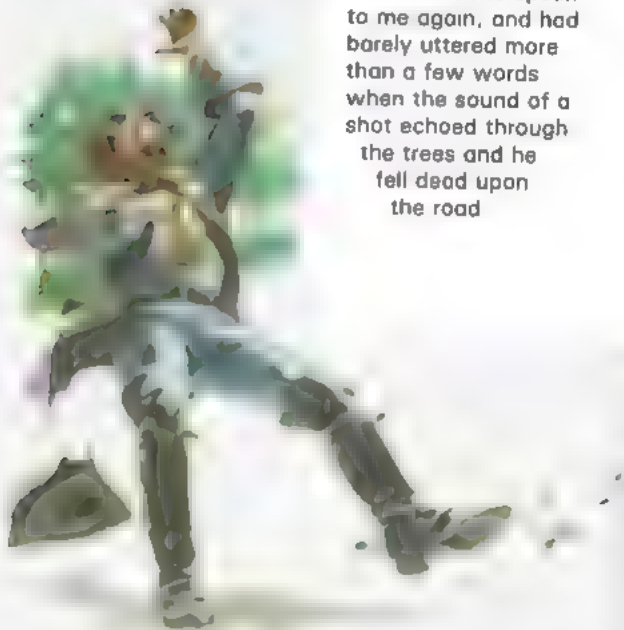
"James of the Glens," I replied.

At this the travellers looked closely at me and spoke among themselves. As the lawyer addressed the big man I realised that I was

face to face with Colin
Campbell of Glenure.


The Red Fox

He turned to speak to me again, and had barely uttered more than a few words when the sound of a shot echoed through the trees and he fell dead upon the road



I turned and scrambled up the mountainside. In an open glade I had a glimpse of a tall man in a black coat and carrying a long gun.

"The murderer!" I cried. "I see him!"



I looked back down to the road. A party of red coats had appeared and, muskets in hand, were already climbing through the trees towards me. I waved at them to hurry, but as I did so I heard the lawyer shout, "Ten pounds if you take that lad! He's an accomplice, posted here to hold us in talk!"

I stood, rooted to the spot. Then a voice said, "Quick! In here among the trees!" As I dived for cover, bullets were already cracking through the branches, and I found myself face to face with Alan Breck Stewart.

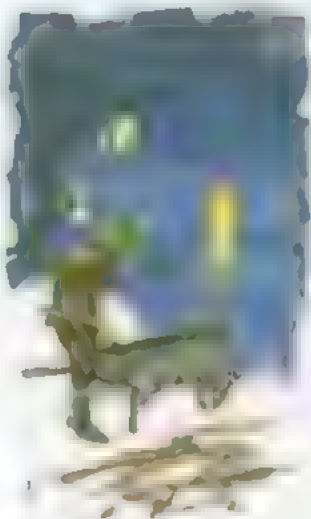
"Come!" he said, and I followed at a run along the mountainside. Through birch scrub and over bare hillside we ran. We stooped for cover. We crawled swiftly in the heather. And, from time to time, Alan stood up and showed himself, so that the soldiers shouted and came even faster in pursuit. I felt I could go no further, but Alan clapped me on the shoulder and I followed him as we doubled back higher up the mountain. There was no showing himself to the soldiers this time.

At length we stopped, almost at the same place from which we had started. I collapsed as one dead. But the pursuit was already far away in the opposite direction.

I was troubled by the thought of Alan as an assassin. But he swore that another man had struck down the Red Fox, and our efforts had been to allow him to escape from the red-coat patrol.

As night fell we set off for Aucharn and James of the Glens. It was about half past ten when we arrived. Lights streamed from every door and window. And in the glare of torches, we saw men taking hidden weapons from under the thatch and hurrying off into the darkness to conceal them anew. As head of the Appin Stewarts in the absence of the chief, Ardshiel, James

was required to organise the hunt for the murderer of the Red Fox. Alan and I were already suspect, and wanted notices would soon be out for us. Weapons were forbidden in the Highlands, and a search for wanted men might find much more. James quickly provided us with a change of clothes, a sword for me, some food, and a little money.



Then off we fled into the night, leaving James and his people to deal with the illegal weapons.



We went eastward. The country was wild and little inhabited. Several times Alan turned aside to leave news of the murder at lonely houses. And in our haste he misjudged the way. Instead of being safely in a place of concealment, morning found us crossing the floor of a vast, rock-strewn valley. High mountains rose on each side. I know now that we were in the wilderness called Glencoe. The land was empty of people, but Alan pushed on. With difficulty we crossed a foaming, rocky river.

As full daylight came to the glen we found a makeshift hiding place in the shallow hollow




where the tops of two huge boulders leaned towards each other. Twenty feet above the ground we were safe from red coat eyes on the valley floor. We prayed that no watchers would be placed on the surrounding mountains.

Throughout a long, blazing summer day we lay on the burning rock. Shortly after daylight the soldiers arrived. They made camp half a mile away, and sentries took up positions on the open ground and on rocks almost as tall as our own. Far up the glen we saw horse soldiers moving to and fro through the heather. We had no water and were tortured with thirst. At one point we lay hardly daring to breathe as a sentry took post directly below us.

At last the sun began to go down. Alan judged that it was safe to descend, and in the cover of the lengthening shadows and the scattered rocks we crept swiftly and cautiously along the valley floor. At dusk we reached a stream where we drank deeply and ate some food. Then we were hurrying on, striking upwards on to the mountains and away from the deadly valley of Glencoe.

High upon the side of a mountain we came to a small wooded glen where trout swam in a stream and a cave promised shelter. Alan called it the Heugh of Corrynakiegh. Here we rested for several days.

But we could not stay there for ever. One night Alan slipped away down the mountain and left word of our whereabouts with one of



his clansmen. We needed, above all, money if Alan were to reach safety in France. Three days later there came a reply. The country was being combed by the red coats. James of the Glens had been arrested on suspicion. And there was a reward offered of one hundred pounds for the capture of Alan and me. The messenger brought not only money but one of the wanted notices.

I was very badly described, and unlikely to be recognised. But Alan was already too well known for safety, and for a moment I was tempted to strike off on my own for the Lowlands and my own people.

The following morning saw us on our way again. We came down from the mountains and on to a desolate moor. There was scarcely any cover, and we were forced to creep from bush to bush, easily visible to any watcher on the surrounding hills. The weather was still hot and cloudless, and our water bottle was soon empty.

At noon we rested. Alan took first watch. Then he slept while I sat guard. And I fell asleep.

I woke with a start. Almost too late. From the south-east a body of mounted soldiers was approaching. As I watched, they fanned out into an extended line covering about half a mile. Then they began a steady advance, probing the heather with their swords.

There was no way we could avoid being taken if we stayed. And if we fled before them, they would ride us down in minutes.

Alan woke and summed up the situation. "We must get clear of their line of advance. That mountain yonder to the north-east is Ben Alder. It is a wild, deserted mountain full of hills and hollows, and if we can win to it before the moon, we may do yet."



Already exhausted, we once more fled for our lives. On hands and knees much of the time we worked our way across the half mile of advancing dragoons. Even when evening fell and a distant trumpet recalled the soldiers for the night we did not stop. The air grew cooler and a heavy dew refreshed us.

But dawn found us numb with exhaustion, still blundering on. Too tired to keep a proper watch, like blind men we walked straight into an ambush.

Three or four wild Highlanders leapt from the heather and pinned us to the ground, dirks at our throats. Alan said something in Gaelic, and immediately we were set on our feet. Under their escort we again headed for Ben Alder, I with the aid of two of the Highlanders who took an arm each and bore me along as if

I were a feather.

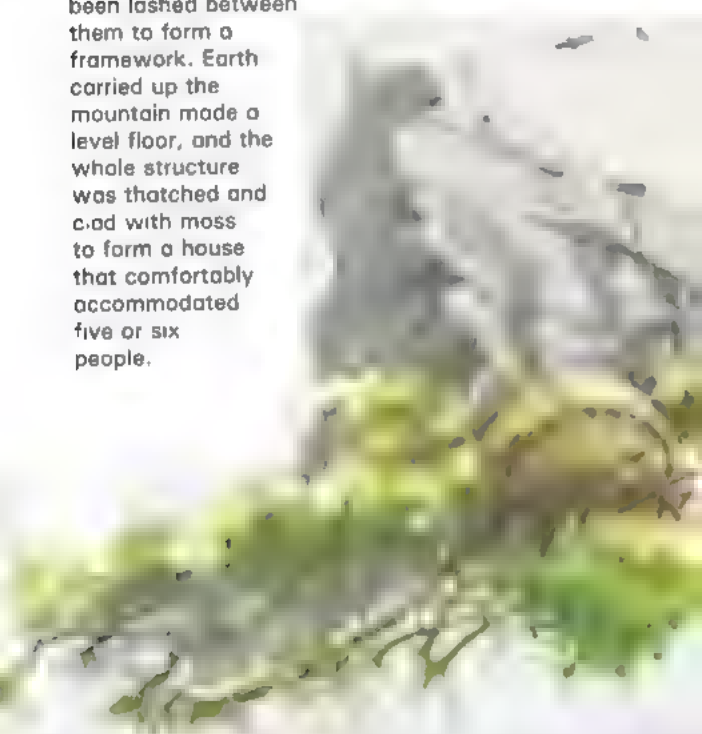


The lower part of the mountain was thickly wooded. Above the trees the crags rose sheer. And we found our place of refuge as guests of Cluny Macpherson, chief of Clan Vourich.

Instead of fleeing like other Jacobite chiefs, he had remained in his own country. He had a number of hiding places prepared, and now we were ushered into that known as Cluny's Cage.

Where the trees grew out at an angle from the rock face, trunks and stout branches had

been lashed between them to form a framework. Earth carried up the mountain made a level floor, and the whole structure was thatched and clad with moss to form a house that comfortably accommodated five or six people.





Alan introduced me to the chief as Mr David Balfour, Laird of Shaws, and we sat down to a hot meal. For this extraordinary house, which looked for all the world like a wasps' nest clinging to the mountain, even had a fireplace. It was formed in a shallow cave, the smoke going unnoticed against the grey rock face above.



But even as I sat down to eat, the world spun before my eyes. Terror, exhaustion, and near starvation were having their effect. Cluny's servants put me to bed, and there I remained, only half conscious, for the better part of three days. One of the Highlanders, the chief's barber, was actually a doctor by profession. I was put in his care while Alan, whose toughness had enabled him to recover by the end of the meal, spent the time playing cards.

On the morning of the third day I felt well enough to get up. I went to the entrance to the Cage. The air felt fresh and I was eager to be on my way. But Alan seemed worried and somewhat shamefaced. And he confessed that in three days of card playing he had lost what little money we had.

Cluny generously offered to return his winnings, and I was glad to accept. But Alan's pride was hurt, and it was in gloomy silence that we left Cluny's Cage and set off down the mountain.

Our flight from the dragoons had carried us many miles out of our way. Cluny provided us with a guide who led us first to Loch Erricht, which we crossed by night. He found us a hiding place on the shore of Loch Rannoch and gave us directions for the remainder of our journey to the Lowlands.


Alan was still sulking, and became furious when he realised that the route would not only take us from one mountain top to another but also through Campbell country. He calmed down a little when Cluny's man explained that it was the last place anyone would expect to find two suspects in a Campbell murder hunt.

We soon lost the benefit of our rest in Cluny's Cage. The brilliant summer weather



gave way to cold, wind and rain Through mist
and low cloud we trudged, travelling by night
and sleeping on the sodden earth by day. We
both grew bad-tempered. We argued as we
walked. And, finally, we had a furious quarrel
over Alan's gambling with our precious funds.
In my fury I drew my sword on Alan. . and
that brought us to our senses, and we were
friends once more

But our friendship did not make our suffering any the less. I was chilled to the bone. I ached in every limb. I felt I should die unless we found warmth and shelter soon. Finally, my legs gave up. I could go no further. Alan reckoned that we must be close to the country of Balquhiddy. The Braes of Balquhiddy were not the territory of one great clan. The people there bore many names. Some were fugitives. There were several Macgregors, kin to the famous outlaw Rob Roy. There were also some Maclarens, who owed allegiance to the chief of Alan's people, the Appin Stewarts.



With one final effort I followed Alan down the bank of a raging stream. It brought us to a house, and Alan knocked at the door. The people were Maclarens. We had found yet one

more refuge. Alan left me and went to find a hiding place for himself, but during the weeks when I lay ill in bed he visited me every evening. The news of our presence in Baquhidder spread quickly among the people of the Braes. I was attended by the local doctor, and my visitors were many.



There was even one of the wanted posters on the wall, I could see it from where I lay. It was a strange life for a wanted man. My host, Duncan Dhu Maclaren was a piper. Once I regained some of my strength he would bring out his pipes of an evening, and often the music and laughter went on far into the night.



And not a single person made a move to betray us. Even though there was a reward of a hundred pounds. And even though red-coat patrols were active in the country round about. I watched from my bed one day as a strong foot patrol and a party of mounted men went by. But they paid no heed to the scattered houses along the Braes.

One day a new visitor came to the Maclarens. He was Robin Oig Macgregor, son of Rob Roy. He and Alan were old rivals, and Duncan Dhu suggested that they settle their



difference with the pipes Robin was known as a fine musician, and so, to my surprise, was Alan. Mrs Maclaren set out food and drink while Alan and Robin sat themselves on either side of the fire. Turn about they played And, *how* they played! Never had music thrilled me so before. It was close to morning when Alan had to admit that Robin was the better of the two Like us, Robin Oig Macgregor was a fugitive, but a less fortunate one. Less than three years later he was caught and hanged.

Late in the summer I was considered fit enough to travel. One last great barrier remained, the River Forth. The main bridge was at Stirling, close by the castle and its garrison of red-coats.

Alan thought it was now so long since the Appin murder that the hunt for us would have slackened. In which case our best plan was to take the most direct route to the Lowlands by way of Stirling.

We left Balquhiddy by night and two days later came by Strathyre down out of the high hills and into the lowlands of the Carse of Stirling. The weather was warm, and we made camp upon a small island where a tributary flowed into the Forth.


All day we lay hidden, eating and drinking and listening to the sound of harvesters in the corn fields along the river. Not far off we could see Stirling Castle. And close under the castle was the bridge.

We set off down river before the moon rose. There were lights in the castle and in the town, but everything was quiet. As Alan had hoped, there appeared to be no guard on the bridge, a narrow, steeply rising stone structure.



We crept as close as we dared, but could still see no sentry. But we could not see over the crown of the arch, and decided to wait.

Crouched in the shadow of a roadside dyke, we heard footsteps. An old woman was coming along the road. We heard her pass on to the bridge. The footsteps grew fainter. She was surely across by now. Then we heard a challenge "WHO GOES!" and the rattle of a musket. The bridge was indeed guarded.

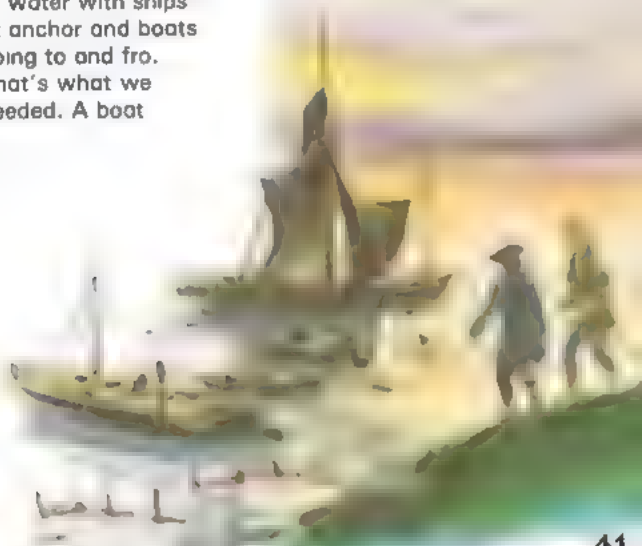


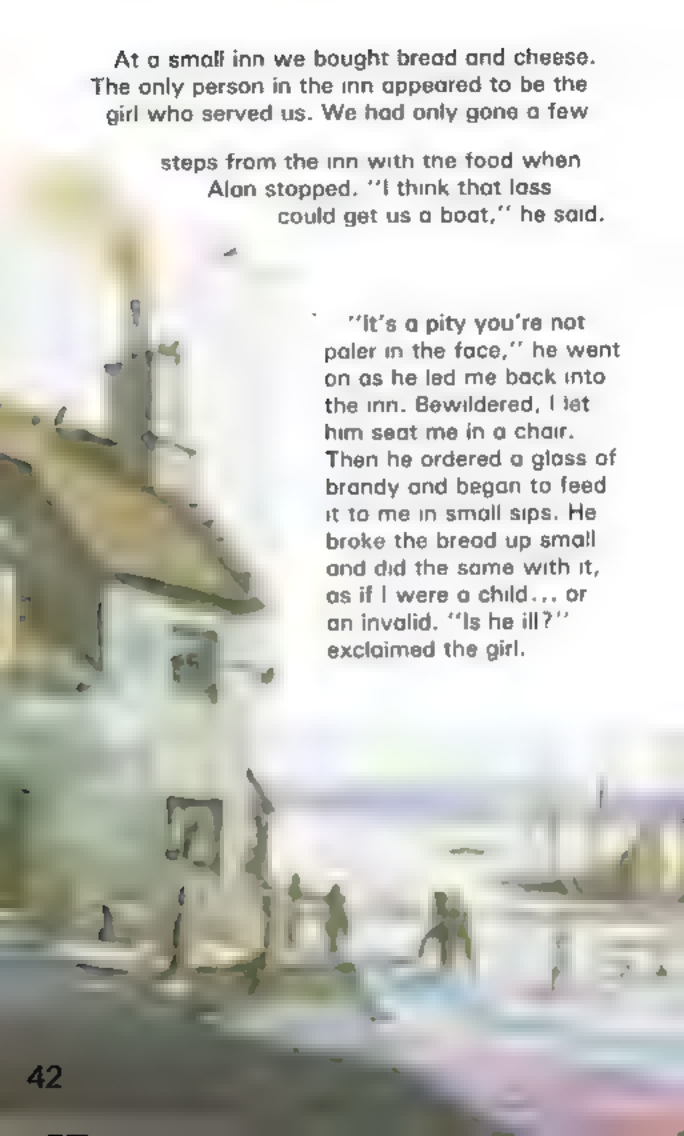
What were we to do now? We had three shillings left. And between us and safety flowed a wide, swift river. Upstream the fords and lesser bridges would also be guarded. So, downstream we went, down towards where

the river opened out into the Firth of Forth
and the sea.

All night we followed the shore, avoiding
towns and villages. Dawn found us near the
hamlet of Limekilns. On the opposite shore I
could see Queensferry where my adventures
had started many weeks ago. And there was

Mr Rankellor the lawyer
He was the one hope
I had of clearing my
name, and of getting
Alan safely to France.
But between us and
Queensferry, there
was a wide stretch
of water with ships
at anchor and boats
going to and fro.
That's what we
needed. A boat





At a small inn we bought bread and cheese.
The only person in the inn appeared to be the
girl who served us. We had only gone a few

steps from the inn with the food when
Alan stopped. "I think that lass
could get us a boat," he said.

"It's a pity you're not
paler in the face," he went
on as he led me back into
the inn. Bewildered, I let
him seat me in a chair.
Then he ordered a glass of
brandy and began to feed
it to me in small sips. He
broke the bread up small
and did the same with it,
as if I were a child... or
an invalid. "Is he ill?"
exclaimed the girl.



"'ll?" cried Alan. "He has walked hundreds of miles and slept in wet heather."

"Has he no friends?"

"Aye, he has," said Alan. "But without a boat he cannot reach them. And what's more . . ." Here, Alan leaned forward and whistled softly a few notes. It was "Charlie is my Darling." A Jacobite song.

The girl gasped. "Is he . . .?"

"Indeed," said Alan. "And with a price upon his head."

With that, the girl brought a hot meal, refusing payment. I asked her if she knew of Mr Rankeillor the lawyer in Queensferry. Not only did she know of Mr Rankeillor, but had heard very highly of him. More importantly, she was sure she could get us a boat.

We hid for the rest of the day in a wood close to the beach. Night fell, and the lights in the houses had long since gone out, when we heard the sound of oars. It was the girl from the inn. Not daring to trust anyone else, she had taken a neighbour's boat. She was a sturdy lass, and before long we stood on the Lothian shore.





We thanked her and bid her goodnight, and watched until she vanished in the darkness on her way back to Limekilns. I prayed that her exploit would go undiscovered. The penalties for helping wanted criminals were harsh.

In the light of day I made my way towards the town while Alan remained hidden in the fields. I walked along the main street of Queensferry, ragged and filthy. The well-clad

citizens of the elegant little burgh gave me odd looks I felt ashamed even to stop someone and ask for Mr Rankeillor. At length I stopped to rest by a handsome house on the landward side of the town. A finely dressed gentleman come down the steps. Plucking up my courage I asked for the house of Mr Rankeillor.

"This is it," he said.
"And I am he."

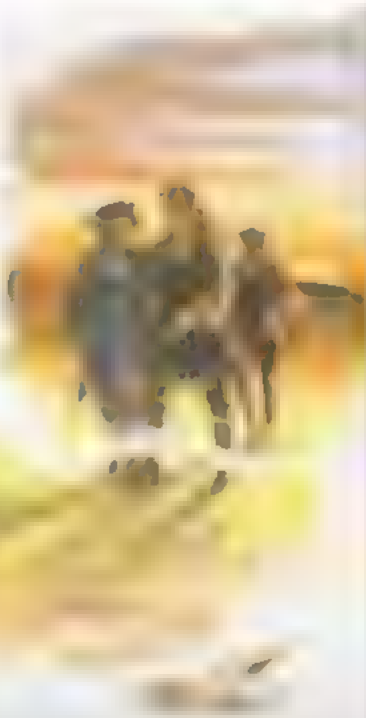
From that moment everything changed. I told him that I was David Balfour. He took me into the house and had me tell my whole story. As a lawyer he would have nothing to do with anything illegal. To protect himself, and others, he had me use false names. Cluny Macpherson became "Mr Jameson" and Alan was given the title of "Thomson"

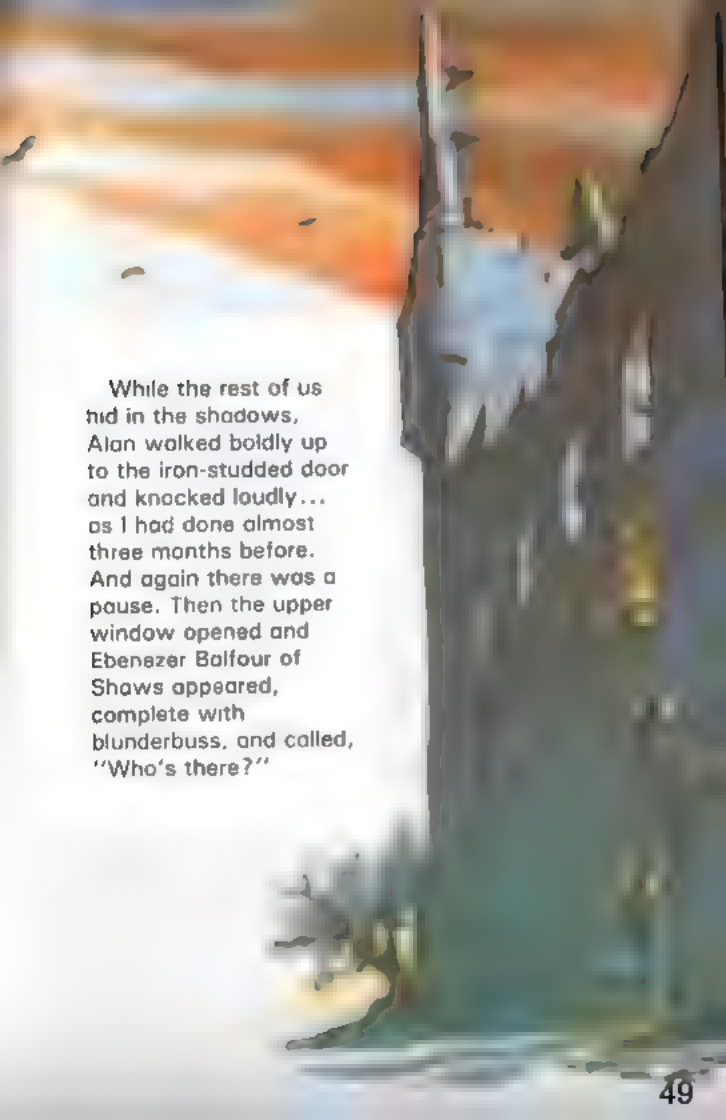


I now discovered why my uncle had had me kidnapped. It seemed that Uncle Ebenezer was the younger son of the Balfours of Shaws. When my grandfather died, Ebenezer stayed in the House of Shaws to manage the estate. His elder brother, my father, went off to become schoolmaster of a remote Border village. On his death it was I, not Uncle Ebenezer, who was rightful Laird of Shaws. I was a rich man, with lands, and money in the bank.

But what was I to do about Alan? Even if he were innocent of the murder of the Red Fox, he was still a wanted man as a Jacobite, among other things. But I could not abandon him now. It was Mr Rankellor who worked out a plan. But first we had to deal with Uncle Ebenezer.

Washed, fed, and dressed in clothes belonging to the lawyer's son, I set off with him and his clerk as night fell. I took them to where Alan lay hidden and explained the plan. Then we walked on towards the House of Shaws.





While the rest of us
hid in the shadows,
Alan walked boldly up
to the iron-studded door
and knocked loudly...
as I had done almost
three months before.
And again there was a
pause. Then the upper
window opened and
Ebenezer Balfour of
Shaws appeared,
complete with
blunderbuss, and called,
"Who's there?"

Alan persuaded him that he had urgent business and that he had better come down and open the door. Uncle Ebenezer did so. Sitting on the top step and pointing the gun at Alan, he said, "What's your business, then?"



Alan told him that he was a partner of Captain Hoseason. Since the ship had been wrecked off Mull, David Balfour could no longer be sold as a slave in America. He was being held captive to be ransomed—or killed. Which did Ebenezer prefer? Confused and frightened, Uncle Ebenezer blundered from one lie to another until, too late, he realised that he had been tricked into a confession. He had paid Hoseason to kidnap me and sell me as a slave in the Carolinas.

At that, we stepped from the shadows

"Good evening, Mr Balfour," said the lawyer.

"Good evening, Uncle," said I.

Uncle Ebenezer said not a word.

Still speechless, he let Mr Rankeillor lead him into the house. We followed. With speed and skill, the lawyer tied up the loose ends. Bringing Ebenezer Balfour before the courts would almost certainly put Alan at risk. He was also an old man. So it was agreed that he could live out his remaining years in the House of Shaws, but that the bulk of the money from the estate would be mine.

The following day Alan and I left the House of Shaws and set out for Edinburgh. We shook hands and said "Goodbye" on the outskirts.



I went on into the city alone to arrange a safe and secret passage to France for Alan Breck Stewart.

But... that is another story.



Stories . . . that have stood the test of time

SERIES 740

LADYBIRD CHILDREN'S CLASSICS

Treasure Island
Swiss Family Robinson
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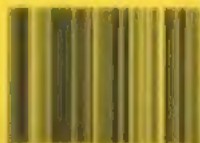
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